



# **CITY OF HAYWARD**

## **AGENDA REPORT**

AGENDA DATE 01/23/01

AGENDA ITEM \_\_\_\_\_

WORK SESSION ITEM WS #2

**TO:** Mayor, City Council, and Planning Commission

**FROM:** Director of Community and Economic Development

**SUBJECT:** Smart Growth Principles and the General Plan

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the City Council review and comment on this report.

### **BACKGROUND:**

In October of 1999 the City Council received and commented on a report about transit-oriented development and its implications for Hayward. At that time it was understood that the implications of transit-oriented development are many and reach well beyond Hayward's borders. The report noted that, "Smart Growth," "New Urbanism," Neo-Traditional Planning," "Sustainable Communities," "Transit-Oriented Development" and other similar popular terms promote the reduction of urban sprawl, creation of pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods, housing that is close to shopping and other services, and encouragement of traditional street grids.

More recently, the term "Smart Growth" has become the most popular buzzword in urban planning and development circles and is touted as the approach that can resolve the problems endemic to urban sprawl. These include loss of open space and farmland, growing traffic congestion, absence of a sense of place, poor quality housing, crowded schools and air pollution resulting from auto dependence. "Smart Growth" advocates argue that the problems of both the cities and the suburbs can be addressed through more infill development, more concentrated development and more redevelopment, especially in areas served by transit or close to major employment centers. The basic concept is to make more efficient use of existing developed areas so that the need to accommodate growth through unfettered expansion of developed area is minimized. "Smart Growth" suggests restoring community and vitality into central cities and older suburbs by focusing resources on these areas.

Although there is no single commonly used definition of "Smart Growth," some of the characteristics commonly associated with "Smart Growth" have been identified by The Smart Growth Network. This is a national network of governments, business leaders, bankers, planners, developers, architects, community groups and environmental organizations, all dedicated to promoting development that serves the economy, the community, and the environment. They list the principles as:

- Mix land uses
- Take advantage of compact building design
- Create a range of housing opportunities and choices
- Create walkable neighborhoods
- Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place
- Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas
- Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities
- Provide a variety of transportation choices
- Make development decisions predictable, fair and cost-effective
- Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions

“Smart Growth” has been embraced by fiscal conservatives, farmland protection groups, historic preservation advocates, alternative transportation interests, environmentalists, design professionals, planners and developers. Yet it brings forward a variety of issues that are difficult to resolve economically and politically. “Smart Growth” may well require reinventing intergovernmental relationships to encourage greater consistency of policies for managing community development and to reduce competition within regions and market areas. There are also significant implications for California’s system of tax allocation. Similarly, creating more concentrated development has implications for housing design and affordability, as well as for transportation planning and financing strategies for encouraging compact development.

### **Implications for Hayward**

Despite the complexity of implementing the type of change in development practices commonly referred to as “Smart Growth,” it appears to be a valid direction for a city like Hayward to pursue. The City of Hayward has a history of safeguarding its valuable resources in order to sustain itself as a healthy community over time. Examples include: Redevelopment of Russell City into a handsome industrial park district; establishment of the Hayward Area Shoreline Planning Association to plan for the protection of our bay shore; adoption of an Historic Preservation ordinance to protect historic sites and structures; adoption of urban limit lines to preserve the shoreline and the hills; and the establishment of redevelopment areas to revitalize the downtown as the center of the city.

The Growth Management Element of the General Plan, adopted in 1993, proactively delineated five major areas of the City and designated them as “Change Areas” (see Exhibit A). These were:

- Downtown
- South Hayward BART Area
- Mission Boulevard Corridor
- Older Industrial Area (Cannery)
- Industrial Corridor

Since that time, the City has undertaken formal planning processes for all of these areas except the Industrial Corridor. New development in the downtown includes the City Hall, B Street Market Place and the Albertson’s-Save-On store. The expansion of the redevelopment effort to

the Burbank Neighborhood in 1998 and the Cannery Area Plan currently underway are addressing the issues of reuse and revitalization in the Older Industrial Area. The recent historic designation of the Hunt's Water Tower will also contribute to conserving our history and maintaining a sense of place in the community. Similarly, the Council has already approved work on development of another amendment to the Redevelopment Plan to expand the project area to include the Mission Boulevard Corridor. This proposed amendment will also include the South Hayward BART Station area, thereby allowing the City to create a funding source for improvements to both of these areas. The last remaining "Change Area" is the Industrial Corridor. Given the recent transformation of the U.S., and particularly the California, economy into an information-based economy, this essential economic engine of the community will demand significant attention during this General Plan Revision process. Nevertheless, the City has already begun to respond to the need for change even here. Specifically, the South of 92 Specific Plan and the current proposal to build housing next to a business park, and include a community recreation facility and retail commercial within it, begins to address the concepts of mixed use and balancing of jobs and housing.

As part of the General Plan Revision process, we are again faced with an opportunity to create policies that will sustain and improve the health of the community, preserve historic and natural resources, and meet the needs of the population anticipated to live here over the next twenty years. If we truly wish to reduce our dependence on the automobile, create walkable neighborhoods, make efficient use of remaining land, preserve open space, and foster distinctive neighborhoods with a sense of place, we will need to challenge ourselves to provide incentives and mandates for creative development. We will also need to analyze which are the most appropriate areas for implementation of smart growth principles. This may require designation of additional Change Areas within the city. The purpose of this work session is to bring forth some more provocative planning concepts than have been employed in the past in Hayward and receive feedback from the City Council and Planning Commission on them. Among the more proactive approaches that staff suggests be considered are: Requiring certain developments to include a mix of uses, limiting the number of parking spaces allowed to encourage transit use, requiring minimum lot sizes for certain development types or areas, mandating minimum densities in areas near transit or services, allowing narrower residential lots if garages are placed at the rear of lots or on alleyways, requiring planter strips between the curb and the sidewalk, and reducing front yard setback requirements. These are only a few among many alternative approaches to managing and encouraging smart growth. Certainly there will be others that the Council and Commission will also wish to bring forward as part of today's discussion.

### **Difficult Choices**

These approaches will require much discussion and thought prior to implementation. Some of them, such as fewer parking spaces and greater densities, challenge basic concepts and beliefs that are strongly held by staff, residents and decision makers alike. Our goal should be to use our past experience and knowledge to inform our future choices, not restrict them.

For example, smart growth principles encourage us to meet the underlying demand for housing created by an ever-increasing population by building to higher densities in selected areas, revitalizing depressed areas, preserving meaningful open space and protecting environmentally

sensitive areas. While many families continue to favor single-family homes on individual lots, smart growth recognizes that planning for growth should include planning for a wide range of housing types to suit the needs and income levels of Hayward's diverse population. We have already provided for the protection of environmentally sensitive areas and preservation of open space through the adoption of our urban limit lines. The concern about higher densities in Hayward has its roots in the poorly designed, constructed and maintained multi-family projects in the Harder-Tennyson area. The undue concentration of so many multifamily units in such a constricted geographic area, without adequate open space, neighborhood services or transportation alternatives, has colored the perception of all multifamily housing. The reality of more recent multifamily housing, such as Atherton Place and Pinnacle City Center, shows how multifamily housing can be sited, designed and constructed to high standards. The negative perception of multifamily housing must be overcome if Hayward wants to preserve land and provide a choice of housing types to meet the needs of existing and future residents. As part of the General Plan review process, Hayward has the opportunity to advocate smart growth principles in establishing standards for new development.

By way of illustration, the Mission Boulevard Corridor is comprised primarily of disjointed commercial clutter, in part due to annexation of developed land and the long-held conviction that major arterials are undesirable for housing and should be limited to commercial development. However, well-designed high-density housing nodes along this major thoroughfare would help to revitalize the area by providing needed ownership and rental housing, upgrading the appearance of the street frontage, providing a population base to support resident-serving commercial activities, and by locating housing near public transit to encourage its use. This type of development might provide sufficient incentive to invest in upgrading public transit systems sufficiently that there would be negligible impact on automobile trip generation. Instituting a requirement that such housing be required to include a neighborhood-serving commercial component if such services were not in walking distance could assure that cars were not essential to living there. It would also allow the City to reduce parking requirements so that more efficient use could be made of the development site. One of the greatest challenges along Mission Boulevard is to create a healthy balance between high-density housing and commercial endeavors so as to assure a high quality of life for both the residents and the businesses.


## **Summary**

Smart growth principles encourage us to meet the demand for growth created by an ever-increasing population by building more compact neighborhoods, encouraging use of transit alternatives, revitalizing depressed areas, preserving meaningful open space and protecting environmentally sensitive areas (Exhibit B). As part of the General Plan review process, Hayward has the opportunity to analyze the implications of smart growth principles as they apply to the city, and develop policies that encourage the use of these principles in our long range planning and development review process over the coming twenty years.

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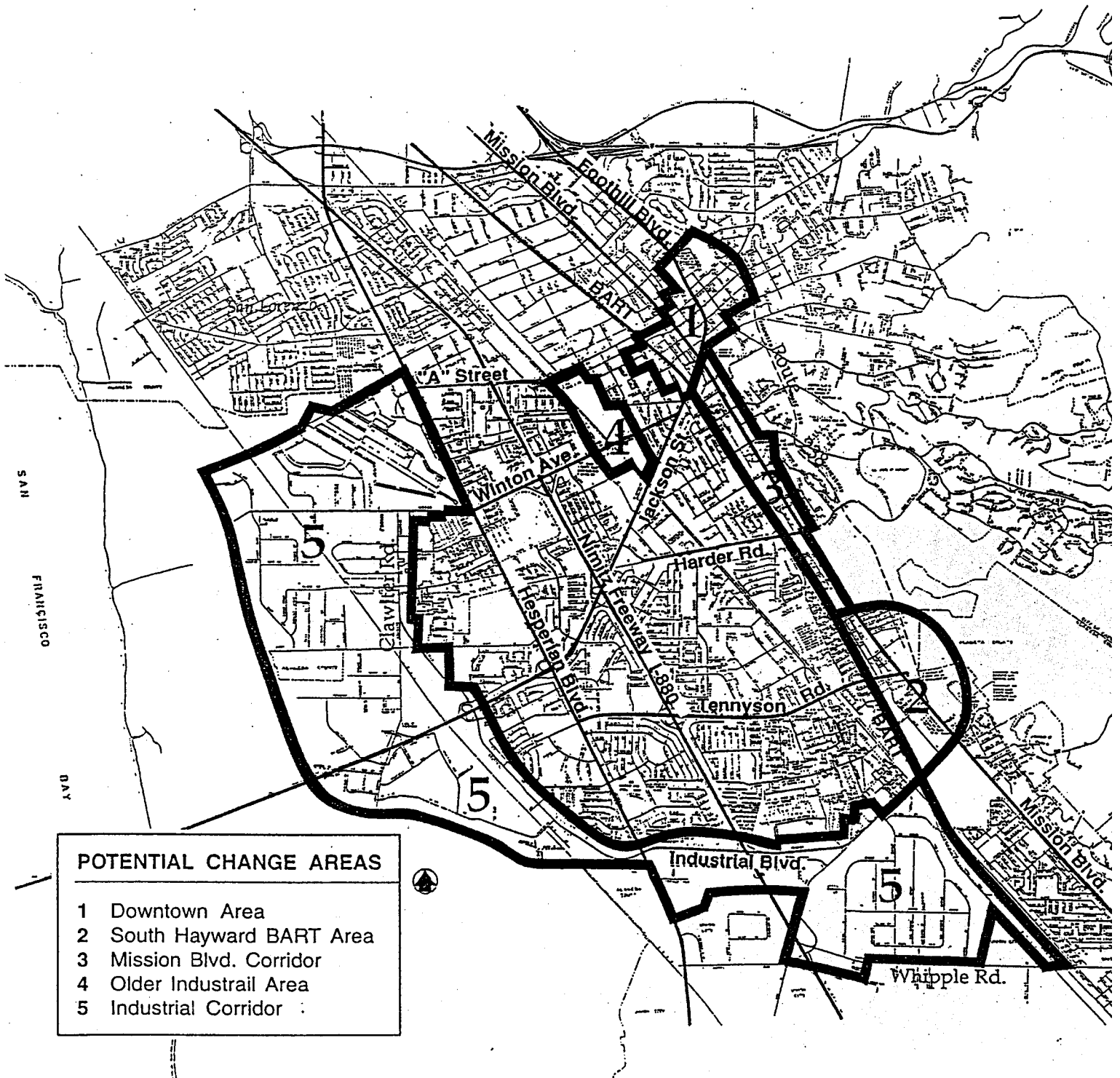
  
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Approved by:

  
Jesús Armas, City Manager

Attachments: Exhibit A – Map of Change Areas  
Exhibit B - Smart Growth: Myth and Fact

EXHIBIT A



**POTENTIAL CHANGE AREAS**

Due to the size, type or quality of the additional attachments, they are not scanable and therefore are not available for website viewing. The report, in its entirety, is available in the City Clerk's Office, Planning Division, and at the Main Library.